

## **Agency Expectations to Ensure Safe and Humane Handling of All Gathered Wild Horses**

This summer BLM Nevada will hold a number of wild horse and burro water/bait traps to gather and remove animals to prepare for the BLM adoption program or long-term pastures.

BLM personnel will ensure that all animals receive safe and humane care during these gathers.

Due to terrain differences, horse/burro temperament, etc. there may be some adjustment in gather practices. However, these will be discussed with all gather personnel before gather operations begin.

COR will develop open communications with the gather contractor for effective operation of the bait trapping event. Routine communication, daily during active trapping if COR isn't present on site, is essential.

All BLM personnel involved with gathers are to be familiar with the contract for wild horse and burro bait trapping.

As a reminder to all, humane handling of wild horses and burros is always our primary concern. The Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) or Project Inspector (PI) will address any actions or issues promptly and within contract specifications.

I am emphasizing the following:

- Handling aids (including body position, voice, flags, paddles, electric prods) will be used in a manner that is consistent with domestic livestock handling procedures. Flags and paddles will be used as signaling and noise making devices first with only light contact of the flag or paddle end allowed. Animals will not be whipped or beaten.
- Kicking or hitting a wild horse or burro is never acceptable.
- Darting of wild horses/burros will not be permitted.
- Electric prods (hotshots) will not be used routinely and will be used only after three other stimuli (to include but not limited to body position, voice, flags, and/or paddles) have failed to successfully encourage forward movement. Electric prods will not be applied to sensitive areas such as the face, genitals or anus.
- Capture attempts may be accomplished using bait (feed, mineral supplement or water) or sexual attractants (mares in heat) to lure wild horses/burros into a temporary trap.
- When using water as the bait, other water sources will not be cut off unless necessary. If this does occur, it will not be for longer than 48 hours.
- There will be no barbed wire used in the constructing of a trap.

- Traps will be checked a minimum of once every 24 hours when the trap is set to capture animals.
- Mares and their dependent foals will not be separated except for transport.
- All sorting, loading, or unloading of horses/burros will be performed during daylight hours.
- Injuries that required veterinary examination or treatment, deaths, and spontaneous abortions that may occur will be noted in gather reports and statistics kept by the COR/PI.
- Wild horses/burros held overnight or more than one day at the trap or temporary holding corral will be fed twice each day and provided water.
- Wild horses/burros will be provided good quality hay; no less than two pounds of hay per 100 pounds of estimated body weight per day.
- All horses trapped will be photographed per requirements of contract and the images provided to the COR. If trapping larger numbers of horses per day, the contractor and COR should discuss the need to this and how they effectively can accomplish it.
- The BLM will arrange for a brand inspector and/or veterinarian to inspect all wild horses/burros prior to transporting to a BLM facility as required.
- When possible, the contractor will have the trailer floor at ground level to ease the loading of horses/burros.
- Prior to the start of bait trapping BLM managers will offer a public tour of the general location to explain why a gather is needed.
- Due to the type of operation (luring wild horses and burros to water/bait), viewers will not be present at the trap site while it is in use.
- As often as possible, public viewing opportunities will be made available at a staging area or other location that will not interfere with trapping, by appointment or arrangement with the BLM.
- The BLM will make information available to the public each day of the gather through use of: online media (webpage updates, social media posts) and by phone. The BLM will use the daily gather report – the same reporting requirements of a helicopter gather.